

East Locust Street Commercial District
C.F. Wheeler Grocery
(Woolworth Building)
521 East Locust Street
Des Moines
Polk County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-143-A

HABS
IOWA,
77-DESMO,
18-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

STATE Iowa	COUNTY Polk	TOWN OR VICINITY Des Moines
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) East Locust Street Commercial District		HABS NO. IA-143A
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE C.F. Wheeler Grocery, F.W. Woolworth Building		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 521 East Locust Des Moines, Iowa		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1880 City Assessor Drawn on 1884 City Sanborn Map		ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Unknown
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) This building first used as a retail store, contributes to the last remaining cluster of Victorian commercial buildings in Des Moines. This Victorian Italianate commercial structure is in a style typical of this once viable commercial district.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Victorian Italianate Commercial		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Masonry bearing walls, brick inside and out, some tile, wooden floors		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) See floor plans, HABS NO. IA-143		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE This building has an ornate cornice but the front facade has been stuccoed removing any architectural interest. The fenestration is symmetrical with three windows each on the second and third floors.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) The first floor was always used as a large, open retail space. The second and third floors were divided into smaller spaces for use as offices and then apartments.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES In 1928 the F. W. Woolworth company requested a building permit to do \$15,000 worth of alterations. It is assumed that it was at this time the first story wall separating 521 from 523 was removed and that a curved glass and marble tile storefront was installed.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Vacant, structurally unsound.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE This building was occupied by a series of retail stores including a carpet and oil cloth shop, a shoe store and a clothing store up until the 1920s. In the late 1920s F. W. Woolworth moved into 521 and 523 and occupied it until the late 1950s.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDE LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Porter, Will. <u>Annals of Polk County and City of Des Moines</u> (George A. Miller Printers and Publishers, Des Moines, Iowa, 1898). Des Moines City Assessor, Des Moines City Directories		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Mary Neiderbach, Assistant Planner City of Des Moines, Iowa		DATE 9/9/83